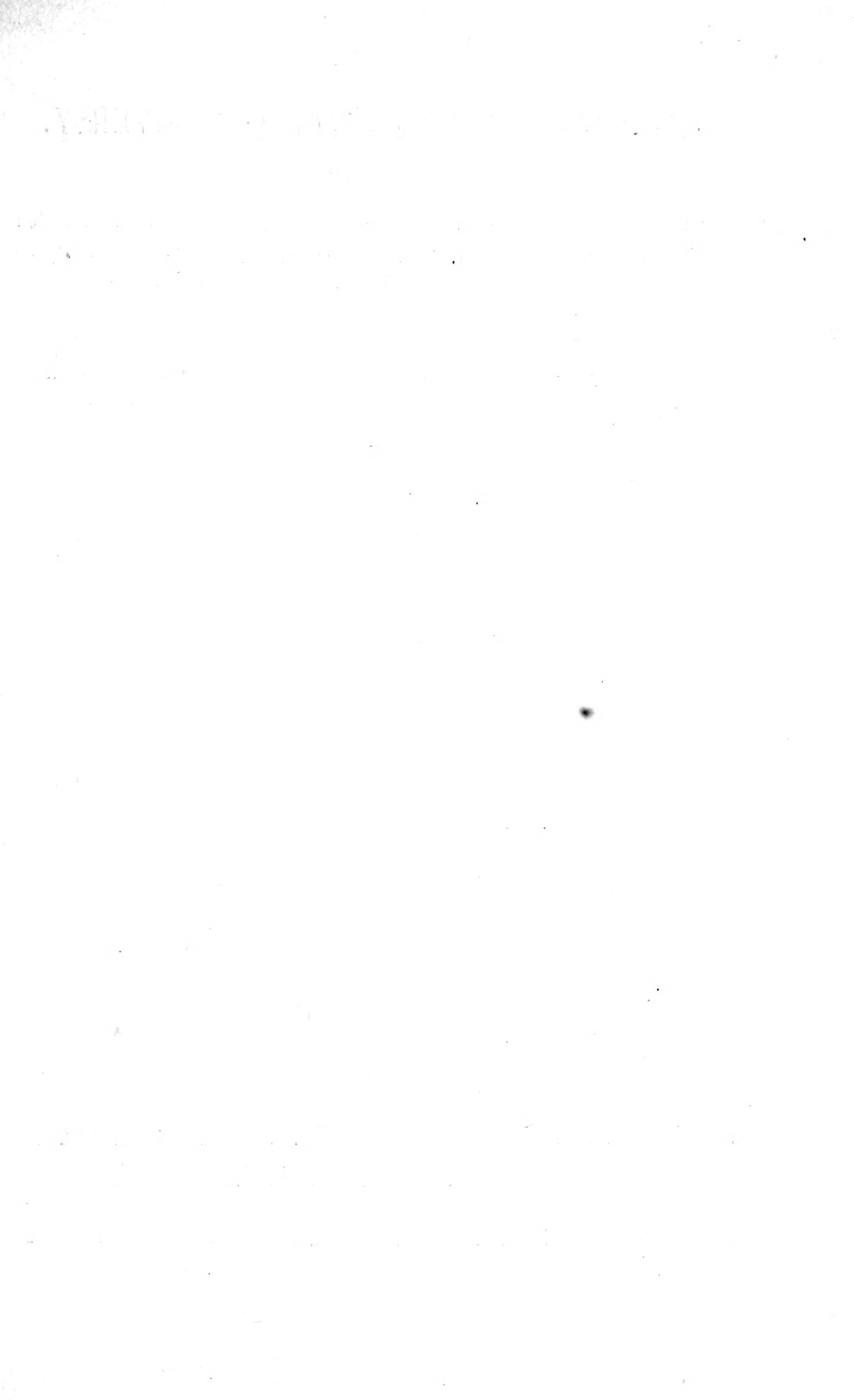




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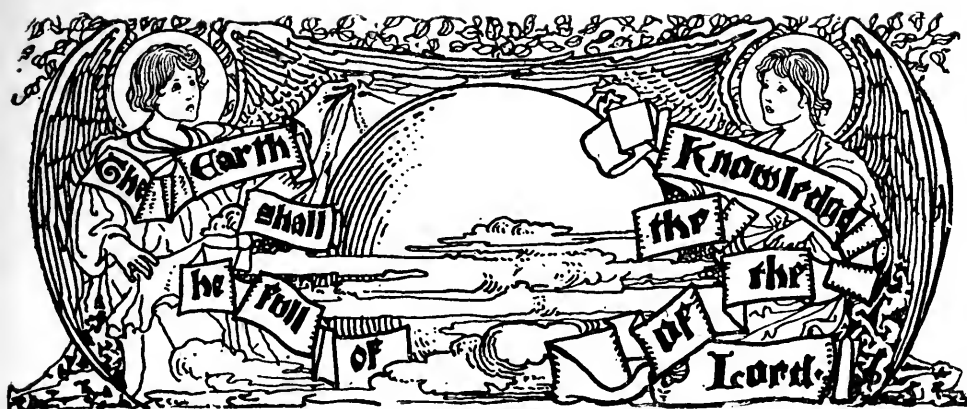
AN IMPORTANT CHAPTER

IN
ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY



G. F. C. K.

1893-1904



AN IMPORTANT CHAPTER

IN

ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY

S.P.C.K. 1698—1904.

IN the year 1656 two boy babies made their entrance on the stage of life. Born in different parts of England, one in a Shropshire village, the other in the heart of the capital, amid different social surroundings, the events of life threw them together, and from about the age of thirty till death parted them, they laboured hand-in-hand in Church work, the results of which have grown with the growing centuries. They were Thomas Bray and Robert Nelson.

Let us look at the England of their day. The Commonwealth had striven to make men religious by Act of Parliament, and to crush the joy and beauty out of the life of England. Religion became a synonym for all that was harsh, gloomy, and repellent. The coming of Charles II. brought an inevitable rebound in the national life: strictness gave place to licence, revelling and drunkenness abounded, infidelity and immorality covered the land like a cloud. It was a hard and cruel age too, for sensuality and barbarity ever go hand in hand. Gentlemen (save the mark !)



made up parties of pleasure to witness the infliction of cruel punishments on wretched prisoners, and mingled with the herds of debased men and women who yelled with delight at the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, or found amusement in cruel and bloody sports. Among all classes the best instincts of humanity were being stifled, and the Christianity of England seemed almost at its last gasp. "If," said the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry in 1724, looking back to that time, "impiety and crime had gone on spreading and increasing among us for the last thirty years, at that prodigious rate as they did for many years before, we had assuredly been one of the most profligate nations in the Christian world."

The spiritual dangers to which the young men of London were exposed in the time of Charles II. caused deep anxiety to the parochial clergy. A special effort was made by Dr. Horneck, Chaplain of the Savoy, and Mr. Smythies, curate of St. Giles,

Cripplegate, to counteract these dangers by the formation of Religious Societies or Guilds.

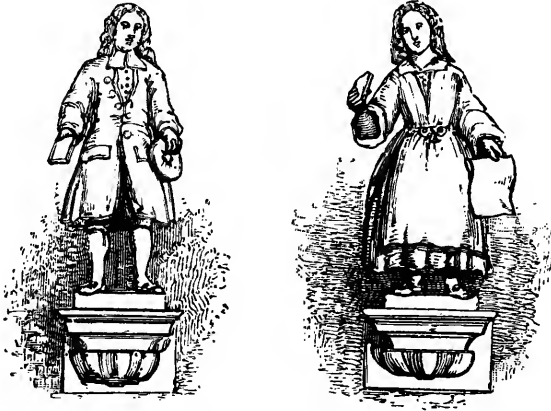
Robert Nelson, the son of a London merchant, one of that sturdy, self-respecting and respected class of whom Izaak Walton was a type, knowing from daily experience how many were the pitfalls lying in the path of young manhood in the London of his day, threw himself with enthusiasm into the work of the *Religious Societies*, and so became a co-worker with the Rev. Dr. Bray.

“The first design of those who joined in this religious fellowship looked no farther than the mutual assistance and consolation one of another in their Christian warfare, but as their sense of the blessedness of religion and the value of immortal souls increased,” they felt that aggressive action was necessary, and that the Church must go to the strongholds of ignorance, vice, and oppression, and deliver the captives of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And so we come to the birth of the S.P.C.K., “the greatest,” to quote the late Archbishop Benson, “and most important Society that we have working within the great Society of Christ. . . . Of all our Societies in England, this is the oldest and grandest, and its work the very largest ever conceived.” The growth of the S.P.C.K. has been that of the grain of mustard-seed, infinitesimal in its beginning, phenomenal in its full-grown vigour.

On March 8, 1698, a little band of zealous men met together “to consult, under the guidance of the Divine Providence, how they might be able by due and lawful methods to promote Christian Knowledge.” We cannot tell if they know how greatly God has blessed their labour and work of love, but this we do know, that the story of their faith and zeal and self-sacrifice is an inspiration to us to-day. As with full heart and loving eyes we turn the yellowing pages of the first Journal of the S.P.C.K. they seem to us like a commentary on the Miracle of the Five Barley Loaves and Two Small Fishes. ‘Long ago a handful of men placed themselves and their means under the Divine guidance, their hearts full of compassion for the multitude that wandered as sheep without a shepherd. God accepted the offering,

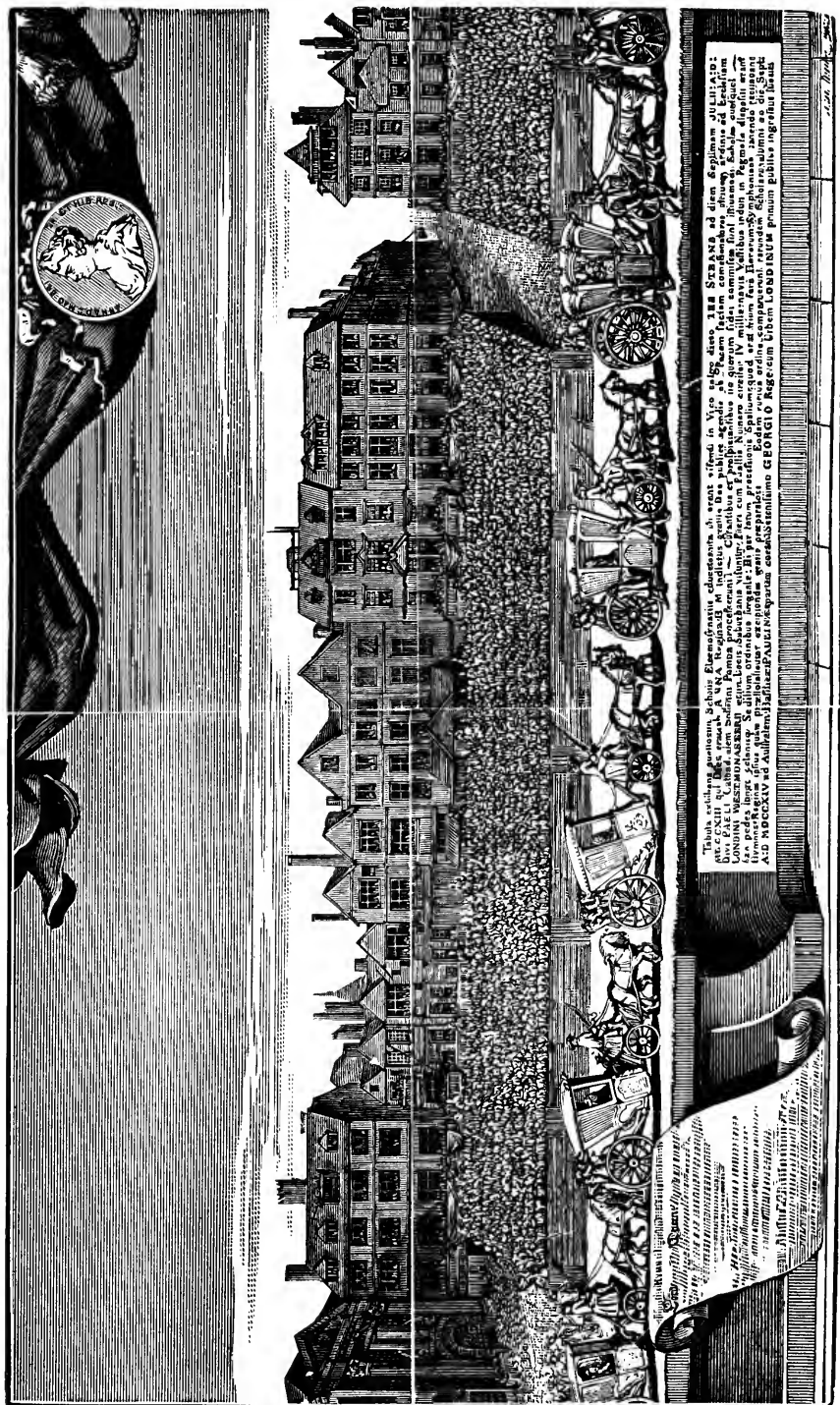
and to-day the five or six men have grown into an army of workers, the scanty purse has swelled in the spending, and "Christian Knowledge" has brought spiritual life, social amelioration, comfort, justice, and joy to millions at home and abroad.



CHARITY SCHOOL CHILDREN, 18TH CENTURY.

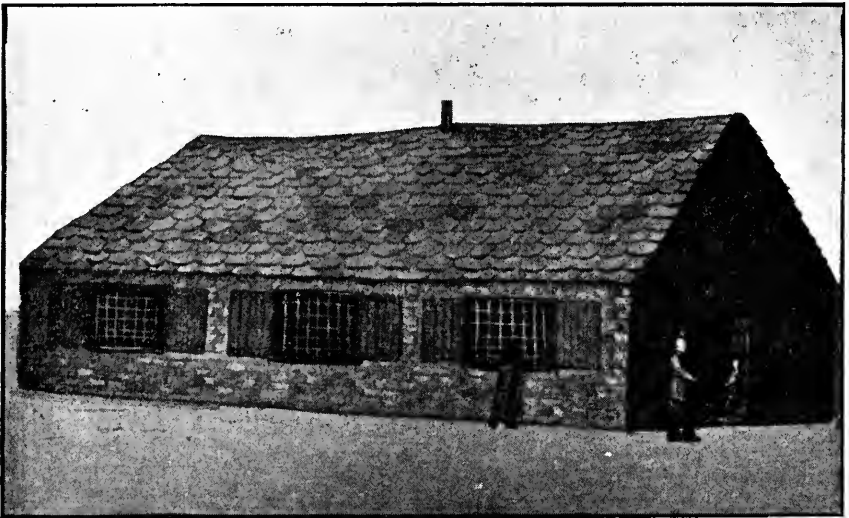
The Pioneer of Education.

The founders of the S.P.C.K. were deeply impressed with the conviction that the worst evil of their day was the "barbarous ignorance of the common people"—ignorance, "that night of the mind without moon or star," and with Shakespeare they believed "knowledge to be the wing wherewith we fly to heaven." Their first efforts therefore were directed to letting in the light of Christian Knowledge on the darkened minds of the young. "The world is only saved," said the Jews of old, "by the breath of the school-children." If this be true, how great is the debt which England owes to the S.P.C.K.! At that time the idea of national education had not begun to dawn on the mind of the State. It was not until more than a century later that a small sum was annually voted, amid contention, by Parliament in aid of Voluntary Schools, and not until 172 years after the S.P.C.K. had established its first school, that the State woke up to the fact that it was bound to see that the means of education were provided for every one of its children.



ASSEMBLY OF CHARITY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE STRAND, A.D. 1714.

In turning over the early pages of the Journal of the S.P.C.K., one cannot fail to be impressed by the intense earnestness of its members in this matter of education, and their zealous endeavours to “prevail with all pious and well-inclined Christians in y^e several parts of y^e nation to join their hearts and purses in advancing to perfection so excellent and glorious a work;” by the splendid liberality with which those early members taxed themselves over and over again for the maintenance of their schools; and by the time and pains they expended in testing different methods of

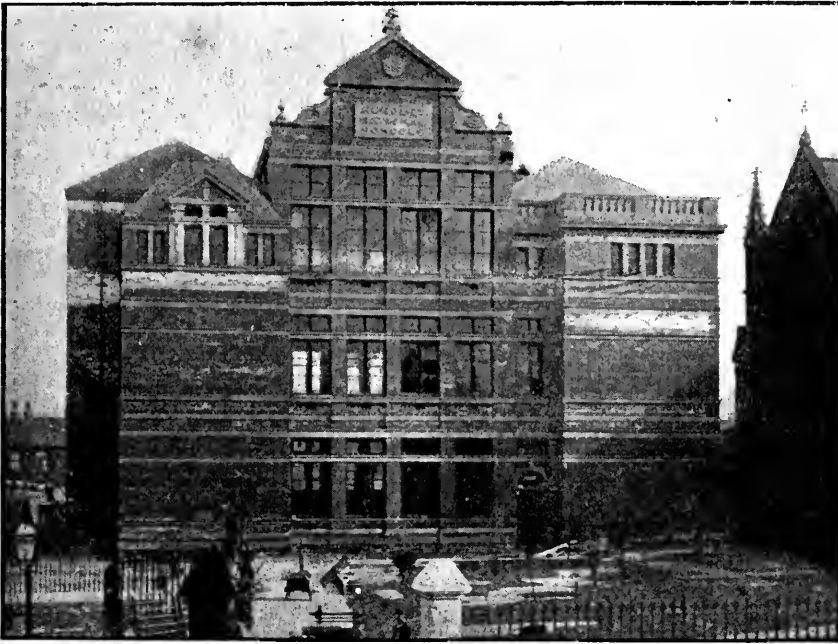


HUNSLET SCHOOL, A.D. 1700.

teaching and satisfying themselves that the teachers were persons who would advance the best interests of the children. With the whole-hearted, unflagging enthusiasm of Nehemiahs they wrought at the foundation of that national system of education by which the whole condition of the poor has been largely raised.

Marvellous success followed the venture of faith. By the year 1704, when the first assembly of the Charity Schools was held at St. Andrew's, Holborn, as many as 54 schools, numbering 2,131 children, had been formed. By 1712 117 schools, educating 5,000 children, had been built in London and Westminster, and during the same period 500 schools had been established in England and

Wales, and the work had extended to the Colonies. That the S.P.C.K. had taken up needful work is evident by this rapid increase, so extraordinary in an age when the difficulties of inter-communication were great, and the opponents of education, especially in the country districts, so ignorant and so bitter. It was not long, however, before the gainsayers changed their tone, and from various centres came the good news that "the parish-



HUNSLT SCHOOL, A.D. 1895.

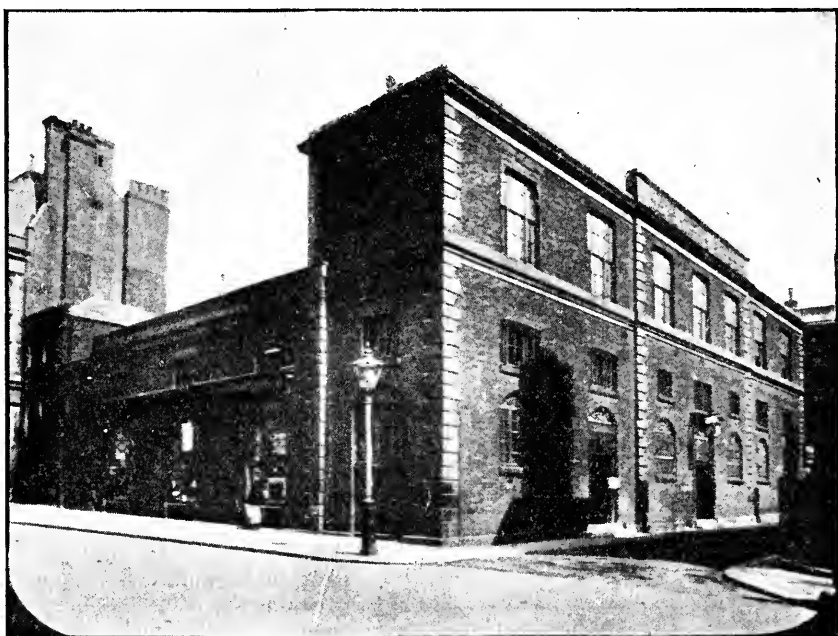
ioners are very thankful for the schools set up, the children being much reformed."

In 1741 the Charity Schools of the S.P.C.K. had grown to nearly 2,000.

It is a good corrective to the self-conceit of the present day, which boasts so loudly over its educational advances, to read the time-worn records of the S.P.C.K.; to note how the Society urged the education of children in their threefold nature, Religion for the soul, Secular Teaching for the mind, Industrial Training to enable them to provide for their bodily wants, and how it

“trusted that these efforts to educate the children of the poor would prove a powerful argument to engage others in better circumstances to make so necessary a provision for their children,” the germ surely of Secondary Education.

In 1811 the educational work thus inaugurated by the S.P.C.K. became so great that it demanded a separate organization, and so the National Society came into being. This daughter Society from its foundation to the year 1870, when the State took up the



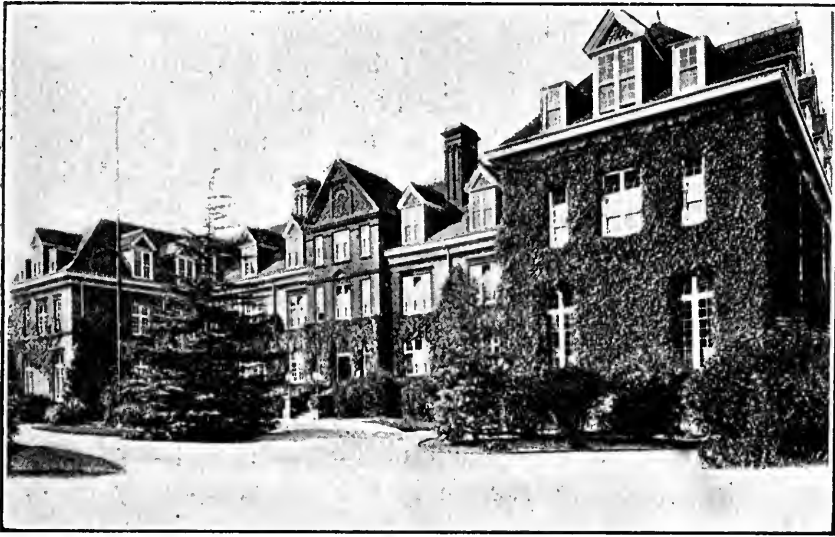
THE NATIONAL SOCIETY'S HOUSE, WESTMINSTER.

educational question, spent £15,149,928 on the building and maintenance of schools for the poor, and still continues its labours. The splendid patriotism thus shown by the S.P.C.K. and the National Society bore fruit in the Act of 1870, which was originally designed to second, not supplant, the educational work of the Church of England.

But it must not for a moment be thought that this branch of the old Society's work is a thing of the past. It is as actively engaged as ever in furthering the religious education of the young,

though in a different way. It has shifted the base of its operations from the schools to the Training Colleges now, the most important factor in the future of religious education. They are indeed the key to the whole position, for in them we touch the teachers of the next generation.

If we want our children to grow up strong in the Faith that has made England great, they must be taught every branch of secular, as well as Scriptural, knowledge from the religious standpoint, by men and women who are themselves earnest, intelligent



ST. KATHARINE'S COLLEGE, TOTTENHAM.

Churchpeople. The children must be surrounded throughout their school hours by a religious atmosphere created by the living faith of their teachers. Hence the supreme importance of Teaching Colleges, in which teachers may grow not only in knowledge, but in grace also, where, while the mind is trained and strengthened by all the latest methods of education, the soul is enlightened and developed by spiritual instruction and Sacramental union with Him who said, "Feed My lambs."

St. Katharine's College, Tottenham, founded and maintained by the S.P.C.K., stands in the first rank of the Training Colleges for female teachers in England. Both its secular and

religious work are of the best, and no effort is spared to give the students the best moral, mental, and physical advantages so that they may go forth to their high calling as workers that need not be ashamed.

It is pleasant, too, to know that the students have a very sincere affection for "our own St. Katharine's." Their happy faces and the bright enthusiasm of their work tell of the home-like care that surrounds them and of which they carry away life-long memories.

The devotional tone of the service in the Chapel tends to make it the true centre of the College life, the place where teachers and taught seek the inspiration and help they need. From the excellent reports that reach the Principal of the work done by those trained at St. Katharine's, we can be assured that from the College is going forth a great body of earnest women who both by their life and teaching are aiding in the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.

The S.P.C.K. does not confine its help to St. Katharine's, but assists with ready liberality the various Diocesan Training Colleges as need arises, and to it we owe many of our Sunday School buildings and Mission rooms.

Besides all this, it started and has largely carried on that splendid scheme of instruction in Church History by means of popular Lantern Lectures, which has done so much to teach all classes of English people what a glorious heritage is theirs as members of the Catholic Church of England, and to feel the inspiration and strength that comes from following in the road worn by the feet of saints.

One great strength of the Society lies in this elasticity and adaptability to the needs of each generation. It recognizes that the old order is continually changing, and that while principles remain the same, the methods by which they must be worked out change with the changing years.

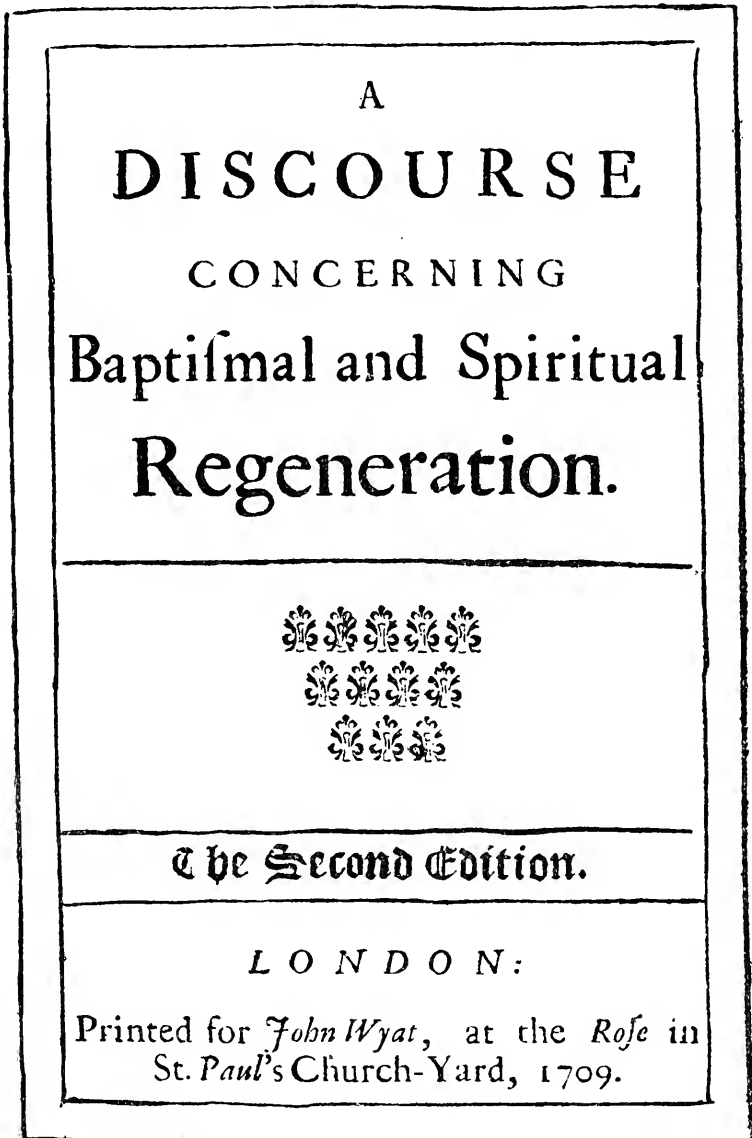
Thus the beneficent educational influence of the Society is still strongly felt throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The Pioneer of Public Libraries.

“God be thanked for books,” said Channing. “The diffusion of these silent teachers through the whole community is to work greater effects than artillery, machinery, and legislation.” The words read like a commentary on the work of the S.P.C.K., the great publishing house of the Church. In these days, when the Printing Press is daily pouring forth a flood of literature, it is hard to realize the state of things at the beginning of the last century. Books were scarce and dear, most of the fiction and poetry was stained with impurity, and the theology with heresy. One might have ransacked a score of villages without finding a dozen volumes, outside the musty tomes in the Hall or Rectory. But saddest of all, in many and many a village not a single Bible was to be found in the cottages.

The wise-hearted founders of the Society felt how vast were the possibilities for good of Pure Literature, and they saw the folly of creating a demand without a supply. Of what use *mentally* would their schools be if there were no books at hand on which the freshly-awakened wits might sharpen themselves, or *morally* if through the newly-opened Eye-gate passed obscene or heretical teaching? So we find that almost simultaneously with the establishment of the schools the Society began that work of printing and circulating cheap wholesome literature by which it is now chiefly known to millions of the public. On one of the first dim pages of the Journal we find the names of those who promised annual subscriptions “for promoting Christian knowledge by raising Lending Libraries in the several Market Towns of the kingdome and by distributing good Books.” Just here we may notice how the Society was commending itself to men of all views and professions. Bishops and Priests by the score (many of them well-known champions of the High, Low, and Broad Church Schools), celebrated authors, learned physicians, eminent barristers and judges, scientific men, merchants and country gentlemen, are all found among the lists of members in November 1699, when the memorable step was taken of issuing

“600 copies of Dr. Bray’s Discourse upon the Baptismall Covenant, bound in sheep’s leather, to be sold at eighteenpence per book and the clear profits applied to the founding of Lending Libraries.” Such was the modest beginning of one of the grandest enterprises which the faith and piety of the Church has undertaken, and thus the S.P.C.K. became the Pioneer of the



FACSIMILE OF TITLE PAGE.

Public Library movement. Even now, in remote country places, one occasionally comes across a sober sheep-skin covered volume, thumb-stained and ragged, bearing the Society's stamp and the name of its first owner in sprawling letters, "Mary Jones her Book 1710," and prized as having belonged to father's great-great-grandmother. Dull we vote them now in their dingy dress, and prosy in the wording of their sound teaching, but those old books were glorious as the vanguard of that great host which the Society's press sends forth annually to carry Christian Knowledge to all parts of the world.

The books issued by the Society show as great a variety in subject-matter as those of any other publishing house, for, like Kingsley, the Committee hold that "if books are good and true, whether they are about religion or politics, farming, trade, or medicine, they are the message of Christ, the Maker of all things, the Teacher of all truth." It would take volumes to trace the growth of this branch of the Society's work since its commencement; we can only indicate a few of the ways in which it has nobly maintained its position as the diffuser of Christian Knowledge, and the great Bible and Prayer-Book Society of the Church. Every poor child in England can now have its well-printed Bible and Prayer Book, its attractive tales; every woman her treasured volumes of devotion or instruction; every man his books of popular science, travel, biography, or petty culture; each cottage-wall may smile with pictures or speak by illuminated texts—all from the depôt of this Society. There are books, too, dealing with Biblical criticism, special theological points, commentaries and helps for the clergy, suited to almost every type of mind and point of view. The Society comes in for a little friendly criticism from time to time from one side or the other in the Church, but it should be borne in mind that it has always striven to be the handmaid of the Church, not the tool of a section. While holding true to "the Faith once for all delivered," it seeks to maintain that freedom of thought which has ever been a healthy characteristic of the Catholic Church of England, so that as of old a Burnet, a Beveridge, and a Hare may find in it a helper.

The annual circulation of the S.P.C.K. publications, exclusive of Bible, Prayer Books, and Tracts, increased from 3,016,815 in 1882, to 10,393,160 in 1903. This is strong evidence that the public knows where to go for a good book. Many thousands of pounds' worth of books are annually given away by the Society—free gifts to working men's clubs, soldiers and sailors, parish libraries, and institutions of all kinds. Its books are everywhere. Sick children turn the coloured pages, old folk pore over the clear type, prisoners read them in their cells, convalescents dream over them on the beach, ordination candidates study them, and the newly-ordained clergyman lays the foundation of a library with them. Wherever need exists there the Society's hands are stretched out with books to cheer, to teach, to solace. The profit from the sale of the remainder goes to help on the work of spreading Christian Knowledge.

Year by year the number of readers increases, and "mankind are creatures of books." How important therefore that the books read in the impressionable days of youth should give a bias towards whatever things are true and lovely. Far too little care is commonly exercised in the selection of prizes and gifts. Gay bindings and striking illustrations are the chief factors in the haphazard choice, and want of time is the excuse for introducing into Church homes letterpress that may be unsuitable or even antagonistic to the Church. Here the Society steps in to the help of the hurried buyer. While its books compare well in point of attractiveness with those of any other house, each one has before its issue been carefully examined by some of the most able and zealous men in the Church, so that even, as in books of adventure, where there is no *definite* religious teaching, the tone is high.

This work is not confined to England, for the Society's publications reach the uttermost parts of the earth. In the snow-houses of the Esquimaux, in the miner's tent at Klondyke and Coolgardie, in the lonely settler's log shanty, in the tin sheds of the Australian sheep shearers, in the palm-leaf cabin of the South Sea Islander, and the grass hut of the Central African, the Society's books and papers are found. White hands and yellow, black hands and brown, hold the volumes with equal delight, and

learn from them in their own languages whatsoever things are good and pure and lovely.

The Development of Lay Help

in Church work is one of the greatest questions of the day. It is with a feeling akin to desperation that many a town clergyman looks round on the thousands outside his church. How is he to reach them? However earnest and active he may be, there must



DRYDEN CHURCH, KEWATIN.

always be many to whom his very face is strange, and of whose existence he knows nothing except as units in the unknown crowd that weigh down his heart. Then there are others whom he knows but cannot influence, for there is a barrier between his mind and theirs. He cannot get into touch with them, simply because, as the late Archbishop Benson said, there are two languages in this England of ours—the language of the educated and the language of the uneducated. What is needed is in the one case an interpreter, in the other a fellow-helper. But where could such a man be found? A man of their own class, accustomed to their methods of reasoning and point of view, and yet able to enter into the thoughts of the clergyman and share his

responsibilities? A working-man instructed in Church doctrine and with some knowledge of the technicalities of parish work? A few years ago such a being was an unsubstantial vision that tantalized the yearning desire, but now he is in active existence, thanks to that Society which has been the support and originator of almost every Church enterprise of modern days.

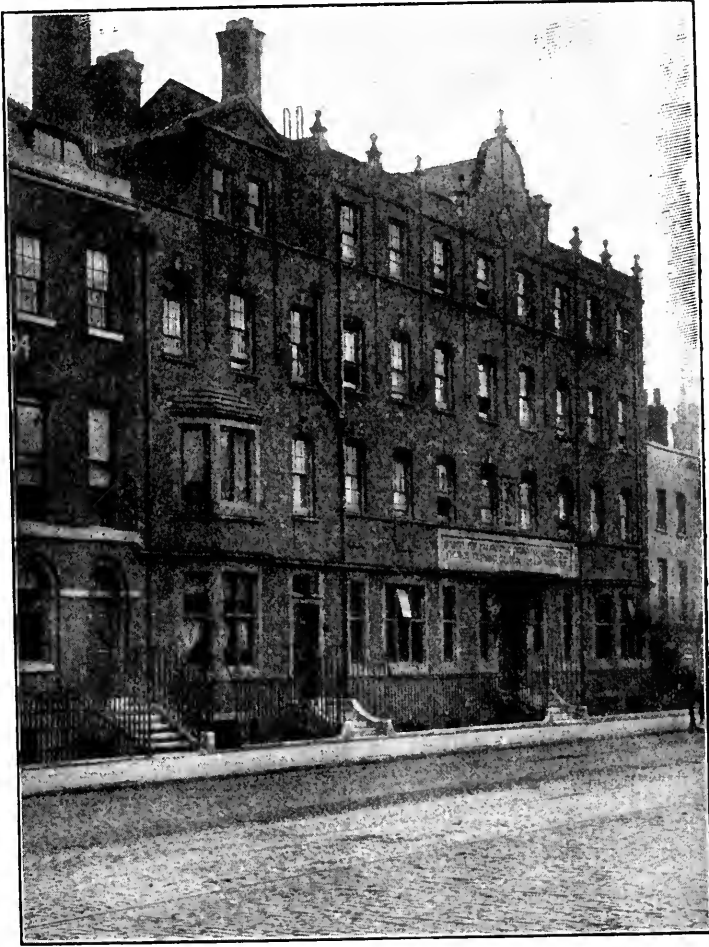
In October 1889 the Society opened four adjoining houses in Commercial Road, E., as a Training College for the systematic instruction of intelligent young men who were willing to devote their lives to the work of Lay Evangelists. It was announced that students were admissible from any part in town or country, and before the expiration of nine months, seventeen men—from Kelso to Penzance—had come into residence. The reality of their zeal was shown by their renunciation of paying secular work at the call of the Church. During their training the men receive definite instruction in Biblical subjects and Church Doctrine, in public speaking and reading, in the preparation of addresses and lessons, and they also gain practical knowledge of parish work from the neighbouring clergy, for whom they hold in and out door Mission Services, classes of adults and children, and Temperance and other meetings. The quality of the men is distinctly good, and the constant procession of earnest workers who go out from the College to labour in town and country parishes, receive the highest commendation from their clergy.

The College Buildings accommodate forty students. There is a Chapel, Library, and Gymnasium, besides an isolation ward and all other necessary departments.

The applications both for training by the men, and for trained men by the parochial clergy, keep step, so that there can be no doubt that this development of the work of the S.P.C.K. is full of hope for the future, and that with a wisdom worthy of their great predecessors the Committee saw and supplied a need which must grow with the growing population.

How great that future may be was indicated by Bishop Westcott, when he said that the College represented a principle far wider than its own immediate scope. It brought vividly before us the part which *laymen* must take in spiritual work,

if the National Church was to fulfil its office for the nation. He could not believe that the Methodist Societies (for instance) would have formally separated from the Church, if she had found a place in her organization for the artisans and miners, whose hearts were



S.P.C.K. TRAINING COLLEGE FOR LAY WORKERS, STEPNEY.

[By permission of the Editor of "Goodwill."]

filled with a passion to make known the Saviour Whom they had found. Lay Work must be largely increased (he said) if the Church was to fulfil her mission.

In accordance with the resolutions adopted by both Houses of Convocation, the men from the Training College are formally set apart by the Bishop of London to the office of Reader in the

Church, and are licensed by the Diocesans under whom they serve, "by lip and life promoting Christian Knowledge among their uninstructed or careless brethren."

So multiple are the labours of the Society for the welfare of the Church and Nation at home, that it is difficult even to enumerate them. From 1699—when it urged upon the Government the abolition of the purchase of office and the prevention of the extortion of money by Prison Officials, the classification and separation of criminals, their industrial employment and compulsory temperance, the licensing control of taverns adjacent to prisons, police supervision of ex-convicts, and aid for discharged and reformed criminals; and sought to raise the moral level of soldiers, sailors, and hackney coachmen; pleaded that "all endeavours be used to unite the Clergy and Laity in the great work of Reformation, and let their interest and aims be the same;" endeavoured to promote Clerical Meetings for devotion and counsel, Public Catechisings and the more frequent Celebrations of Holy Communion—to the present day, there are few good works that do not owe their inception or support to the venerable Society. From the time when Mr. Wesley plastered the walls of his village alehouse and market-place with the Society's broadsheets against Immorality, and Dr. Todd reported that "of the many thousands of the Society's books on the Holy Sacrament circulated in the Diocese of Carlisle, almost every one had brought a fresh Communicant to Church and caused everywhere a visible Reformation of Manners," to this day, when the erection of Mission Rooms, the establishment of Church History Lectureships, the issue of Magic Lantern slides, tell of new requirements, there is not a need of the Church which its faithful handmaiden has not striven to supply.

We turn now to glance at the Society's work outside of England, and on board the great ferry-boats that ply between the Homeland and the British Dominions beyond the seas.

Work among Emigrants.

In 1836 Mr. Gladstone, then late Under-Secretary for the Colonies, asked the Society to consider how it could spiritually

help the crowd of emigrants who every year left our shores. This work was at once undertaken, and developed ten years later into the systematic visitation of the outgoing vessels by the Society's Port Chaplains, and in 1850 Mr. (afterwards Bishop) Abraham was appointed the first long-voyage Chaplain. The work has greatly increased. The Chaplains at the Ports of Departure give letters of introduction to the Chaplains at the Ports of Arrival to all who will accept them, and such timely counsel as each case seems to demand, and they have a special eye to those com-



mended to their care by the Parochial Clergy. But in the noise, confusion, and jostling at the time of embarkation, when hearts are full of thoughts of home and friends, the opportunity for the word in season is fleeting and disturbed. Here the long-voyage Chaplain steps in, and blessed indeed the ship that carries one of these faithful men, whose tact and good-humour soon commend him to the emigrants, and he becomes the centre of the life in the forepart of the ship. He holds frequent services, which grow daily in attendants and earnestness; the old prayers and hymns come with new meaning on the heaving ocean—severed from the past, journeying to an untried future. Rough men, indifferent or

antagonistic to the Church at home, break down at these services and renew their Baptismal Vows. The Chaplain also holds Bible classes for young and old, and deals individually with souls. Here he is comforting a despondent mother ; there, pleading with a wilful girl ; bringing hope now to some derelict on life's sea ; then writing an intercessory letter to the parents of some wayward boy. He distributes literature, enters into and refines the games and songs of the people, and is ever ready to advise about their future.

The large numbers of girls who were leaving England induced the Society in 1886 to engage in a fresh branch of work by organizing protected parties under the care of experienced matrons. The results have fully justified the expectations of the Committee, the quiet and dignified behaviour of the girls on deck is remarked by the other passengers, while the lasting religious influence of the matrons is evidenced by the grateful letters received from parents and friends. A gentleman has said that "if he had a young friend going abroad, he would rather send her in the steerage under the matron's care than in the saloon without her."

But the Society's work for the emigrant does not end with the voyage. From the hands of the Church at home it received them, into the hands of the Church abroad it renders them. At the principal ports in the world the Society has either its own chaplains or has arranged with the local Anglican clergy to receive the wayfarers, and put them in touch with the Church abroad. Thus by every means in its power does the S.P.C.K. endeavour to prevent that leakage from the Church of their fathers that in days gone by formed so serious a drawback to the advantages of emigration. This and not the promotion or discouragement of emigration is the sole object of the Society. It deals simply with the *fact* that so many thousands leave our shores every year, and that of these a large proportion are Church-people, whom it is the duty of the Church to guard and guide on their journey, commend and transfer on arrival to the Church in the place to which they are bound.

Even then the S.P.C.K. has not done with the emigrant and his

surroundings, for it helps the Church beyond the seas to provide for his spiritual needs. And this is not work which it has taken up recently—it is as old as the Society, and dates from the days when emigration was largely compulsory and consisted of the offscourings of the population.

The Imperial Work of the S.P.C.K.

About the year 1698 the spiritual state of the American Colonies began to press on the conscience of the Church at home. The unfortunate Bishop of London, whose diocese if not so populous was as exacting as that of his successors, was supposed to have the oversight of a country three thousand miles across the ocean, where settlements of English folk straggled along the coast-line from Maine to Carolina. In the Northern States, where Dissent ruled, Church-people, by means of imprisonments, whippings, and expulsion from the townships, had been scattered as sheep in a wilderness, and there was but one clergyman north of Virginia. In the Southern States, where the Church was in the majority, the condition of affairs was almost beyond belief. In 1696 matters seemed to have reached a crisis, and Bishop Compton appointed as his commissary, Dr. Bray, whose piety and ability had been proved by splendid work in England.

Under the auspices of the newly-formed S.P.C.K. Dr. Bray set forth on his voyage to America, an adventure not to be undertaken in those days with a light heart. Capture by pirates, death by starvation, thirst, typhus, small-pox, or mutiny, all loomed on the horizon. Willing to spend and be spent to the utmost in the service of Christ and His Church, Dr. Bray sold off his worldly possessions to meet the expenses of the voyage and his stay in America. Arriving at his destination he found that the half of the evils had not been told him. Hundreds of miles separated the clergy from each other, and, left without elevating outside influences, who can wonder that some of the lonely men fell morally and socially? Without episcopal visitation, without spiritual intercourse, without books, surrounded by settlers who

for the most part had but one idea of enjoyment, a vicious, drunken revel, and by gangs of white slaves whose crimes had procured their emigration, without a sympathetic Society at home to cheer their solitude by friendly letter and ready help—strong, indeed, must have been the spiritual life that could shine brightly in such an atmosphere. Some there were, thank God, whose praise is in the Church to this day.

As Dr. Bray went up and down among the plantations, his heart ached as he saw that the harvest truly was plenteous, but the labourers—how few, how discouraged, how sometimes unworthy! His keen intelligence saw at once the key to the problem: a Bishop to oversee the work, more priests to sustain each other by *esprit de corps*, books to keep their brains from rusting, schools to raise their flocks from the slough of ignorance into which they had fallen. Such was the Colonial work which first presented itself to the S.P.C.K.

It was soon seen that the work was so gigantic and so urgent that it demanded the whole energies of a special organization, and so the S.P.C.K. brought into being (1701) the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, on which devolved the duty of providing living agents for the Church abroad. In the two or three years, however, in which the S.P.C.K. undertook the work, it secured “in Maryland a sufficient maintenance for sixteen clergymen, settled their glebes, fixed libraries, and dispersed among the people many thousand practical and devotional books with good effect.” Several of these libraries still exist, and are spoken of by Americans with enthusiastic gratitude.

The Society, though it ceased to supply men, kept the stream of its charity flowing towards the American colonies, and as each succeeding outpost of our world-wide Empire has been planted, there it has stretched forth its hand to promote among the settlers, and those under their influence, that Christian Knowledge without which all worldly gain is dross.

About a hundred years after the formation of the S.P.C.K., England's threefold Cross began to dominate the world. India with its unnumbered millions came to us; Canada with its unknown vastness, Australia with its still unexplored regions, fell into our

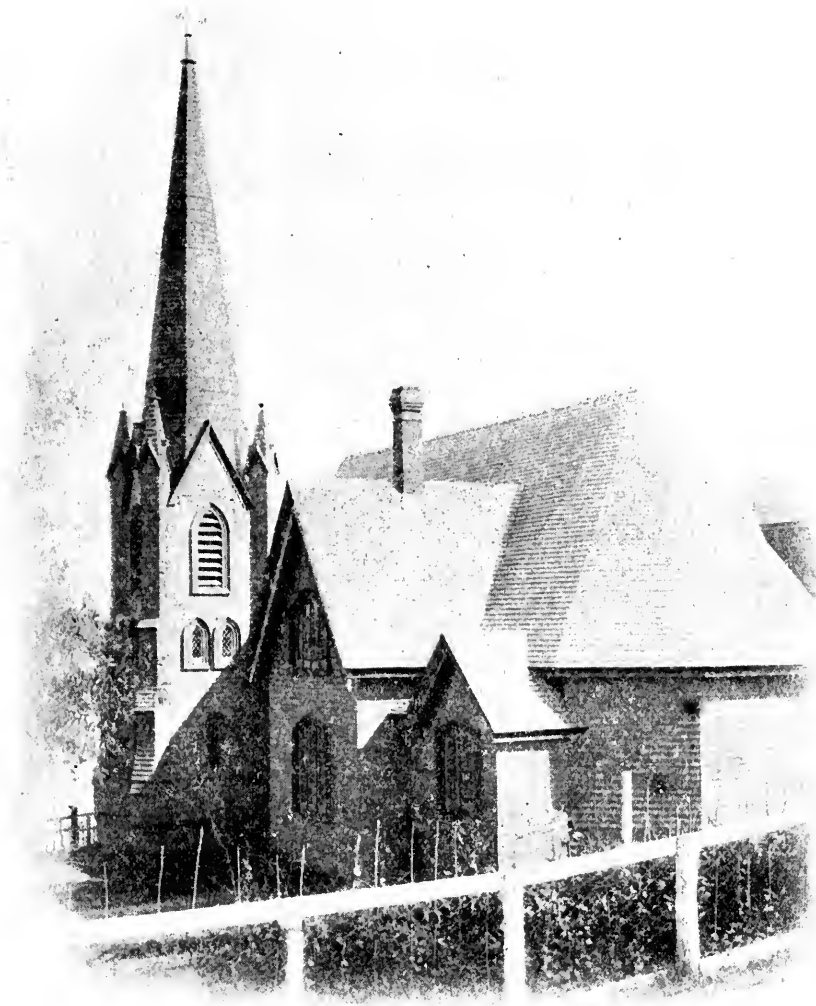
hands. Greed of gold and lust of conquest, it must be confessed, distinguished the secular power. When representations were made to an eminent statesman as to the spiritual condition of a colony, he replied—"Never mind their souls, make tobacco." Then it was that the S.P.C.K. and the S.P.G., parent and child, buckled on their armour and stood shoulder to shoulder, determined that England's Church should be with England's children wherever their roving spirit might lead them. Decade after decade passed away, and still the struggle was maintained. In spite of discouragements and almost insuperable difficulties, the work has gone on, until now Bishops from north, south, east, and west tell of the work accomplished by the S.P.C.K. and the S.P.G.

The work of the Society abroad has been as varied and extensive as its work at home. As in England it may claim to be the pioneer of most of the educational and social reforms which have ennobled our land, so it may justly stand forward as one of the originating sources of that Imperial Unity which fills our hearts with patriotic pride.

In the old days the unity of the Church paved the way to the political unity of Anglo-Saxon England, so in our generation the unity of the Anglican Communion preceded and made possible Imperial Federation. The first Lambeth Conference met some time before the Imperial idea had taken root in the minds of statesmen. An American statesman has said that "if the Anglican Church abroad had been as closely linked to the mother Church in the Hanoverian days as it is to-day, the United States would still have formed part of the British Empire." What is the agency that has been quietly and persistently forging those links of union that bind the interests of Churchmen together all over the world, and has made of scattered ecclesiastical fragments a federation of hearts? It is the S.P.C.K. working hand-in-hand with its daughter, the S.P.G. The first Archbishop of Ontario, as one who might claim to be the originator of the Lambeth Conferences, declared that the influence of those two great Societies did much to make such conclaves possible.

It is impossible to mention even a tithe of what the Society is

doing abroad in establishing schools and colleges all over the world, endowing Bishoprics, building Churches, founding scholarships. During the reign of Queen Victoria alone it spent considerably over £100,000 in helping to raise the number of colonial and missionary Bishoprics from seven to more than one hundred. We are realizing more and more the vital importance of providing an ecclesiastical *chief* as the first step in opening new centres of Church activity, but the scattered nature and poverty of the population often render the raising of the funds locally impossible. Here the S.P.C.K. comes forward with a grant towards the Bishop's salary for a certain number of years, and the offer of a block sum to encourage the spirit of self-support. It also creates endowment funds for the support of the mission clergy, and defrays part of their passage. The most wide-spread of all its works is the building of churches and schools. From the Cathedral at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, to the Church Hut on the Little Umzimvubu, Kaffraria; from the tiny school amid the eternal fogs of Spaniard's Bay, Newfoundland, to the great colleges of India; from the lonely Falkland Islands to the Korea, rises the sound of grand *Te Deum* and lisped "Our Father:" the voice of children stumbling through their alphabet, and of polished scholars unfolding the deep mysteries of God, all telling of the work of this Society in promoting Christian Knowledge. Archbishop Lewis of Ontario said that "during the thirty-six years of his episcopate he had seen 300 churches built in the diocese of Ontario, towards most of which the S.P.C.K. had given a grant. Multiply that by ten—the number of dioceses in his province of Canada—and some idea could be formed of the immense help of this branch of the Society's work alone." He spoke also of its great help in the cause of higher and religious education abroad, referring, as examples of its work, to Bishop's College, Lennoxville, and the University of Trinity College, Toronto, which hold a front rank among the educational establishments of the Empire. Like testimonials come from the other provinces of the Dominion, from Australia, New Zealand, the Cape, and India.



PORT MULGRAVE CHURCH, NOVA SCOTIA.

The Foreign Educational Work.

“Not only does the Society give to our own kith and kin, far beyond the seas, the means of grace and hope of God, but it brings the word of God to many that never heard it before,” wrote

Bishop Stone-Wigg of New Guinea. From the time when it strengthened the hands of the saintly Grundler, translator of the Bible into Tamil, and Ziegenbalg, of Plutshco and the holy Schwartz, to the present time, it has never ceased to labour along its own well-defined lines for the conversion of the non-Christian world.

The Society's foreign educational work falls under three heads, boys', girls', and industrial schools. India has always absorbed a large share of its interest and funds, and the results have been approved and commented upon in Government Blue Books. In many Colleges in Southern India and at St. John's College, Agra, founded in 1850, which has more than one hundred Christian students on its roll, the Society has founded scholarships for native Christians, from whom will come the evangelists and clergy of the future Church of India. A native ministry, learned and devout, is the hope of India, for Christianity cannot enter into the fibre of a nation's being unless it is preached by the native-born. The work, therefore, which the Society is doing among the Christian lads and men of India is fraught with cheering expectation. Not less, perhaps even more important, is the education of the girls of India. Female influence, although it works from behind the purdah, is quite as potent in India as in any other part of the world. The girls of to-day are the mothers of to-morrow, who will influence their boys for good or evil in the plastic days of childhood. The S.P.C.K. provides scholarships in the dioceses of Lahore, Madrâs, Travancore, and Cochin for the higher education of women. "The change wrought in the appearance and tone of the girls is simply marvellous," is the report of a visitor to one of the schools. Perhaps one of those bright intelligent faces may be that of the mother of an Indian Patrick, Aidan, Columba or Chad, who by his life and doctrine shall awaken the sleeping soul of the East. In the Industrial Schools the Society provides Technical Training for the native Christians, the germ undoubtedly of a great future development.

This threefold educational cord the S.P.C.K. is twining in India, Australia, Japan, Africa, Burmah, and among the Red Indians of the North-West.



BURNT GROUND SCHOOL, JAMAICA.

The Foreign Translation Work.

The S.P.C.K. was the pioneer in the movement for providing all the races of the world with the Bible in their own tongues. The work began near home. In 1713 there was scarcely a Bible in Wales in the vernacular. In a few years, by the agency of the S.P.C.K., there were almost as many Bibles as there were people who could read them. Between 1748 and 1768 it printed and circulated 30,000 copies of the Welsh Bible in the Principality, while in 1799 it produced yet another edition of 10,000 copies, which was sold at half the cost of the sheets alone. It is a question whether there were anything like the number of readers of Welsh in the Principality to warrant these large editions. We can safely infer, however, that the S.P.C.K. was generous in their production, and that the story of there being at one time a demand beyond the supply is apocryphal. If we look to its

work in connection with foreign countries, we find that in the year 1720 it printed and circulated 10,000 Arabic New Testaments, and 6,000 Psalters in the same language.

The work has grown, until now the Society publishes Bibles, Prayer Books, commentaries and other books in a hundred different languages and dialects. The publication of the Bible in a new language represents years of heavy expense and patient toil on the part of the Society at home and the missionary abroad. Many of the dialects have never been reduced to writing before the missionary appeared. With laborious care the good man puts the rude syllables into some written form and sends a list of words to the Society to print for him. Then he tries his hand on short sentences which the Society also prints, only perhaps to find that they do not properly represent the inflexions of the dialect, and so convey inaccurate ideas to the people.

The missionary, therefore, must start afresh, and the S.P.C.K. melt down its type and cast new characters. So with infinite pains and many disappointments chaos gives place to order, and a new printed language is born into the world. Such work can only be carried on at a heavy money loss, and therefore no ordinary publishing house could undertake it. But workers in every mission field turn to the Society with the certainty that no reasonable request will be refused ; and these requests increase in number year by year. Wherever the vanguard of Christ's conquering host plants His Banner, there the S.P.C.K. builds the "stairway," by which the heathen climb to the full knowledge of God. Hear what the Bishop of Caledonia said : "Without the Holy Scripture in the vulgar tongue a native Church may live, but not grow. To a fixed point oral instruction will lead infant churches, and then the freshness of the converted and spiritual life ceases ; unless a stairway is hewn out of the steep mountain side for the spiritual adventurer to climb, and to help the rest to a healthful discontent. This stairway is the printed page of Holy Scripture which you (S.P.C.K.) supply us with when our translational work is done."

"Formerly," said an intelligent Indian, "we picked up a few links (meaning texts of Scripture taught orally), now you have given us the chain, that is, the complete Gospel in our own tongue."

Another Indian added this simile, "The door was but ajar—a slit let in the light ; now the door is wide open. We see Jesus all the way, and the light within shows us sins we knew not of before." Surely this is one of the noblest of the many noble works undertaken by the grand old Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

The Society also sends printing-presses and types to mission stations where they can be used to advantage. The oldest and most important of these is the S.P.C.K. Press in Madras, an establishment employing nearly four hundred workpeople of all ages. It was founded in 1728 by the Society, which in those days was responsible for the upkeep of all missionary enterprise in South India.

Medical Missions.

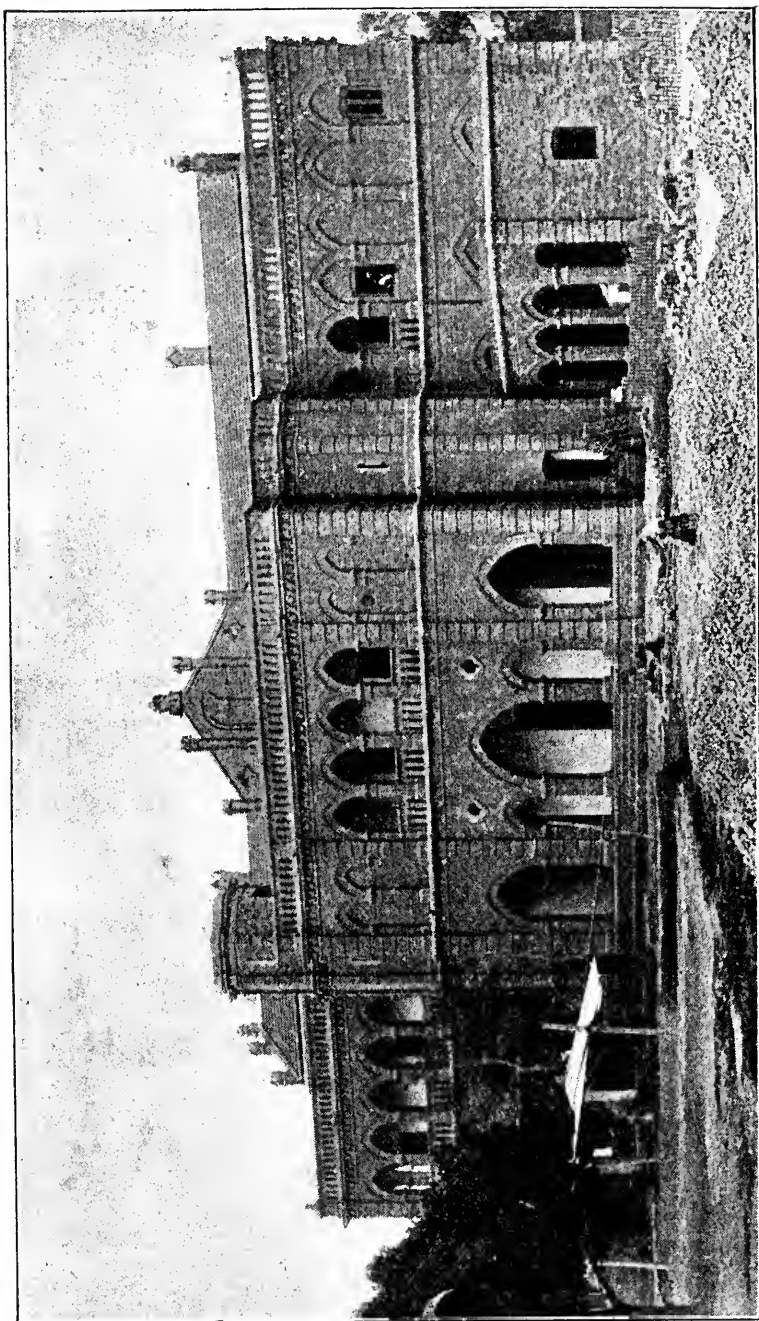
Not yet is the end of the list of the Society's good works reached, for very close to its great heart is the cause of Medical Missions, by which so often the soul of the heathen is won through his body. In Sierra Leone, Madagascar, Pondoland, Durban and Capetown ; in India, Palestine, China, Japan, the Korea and British Columbia, it lays hands of healing on the wounds and bruises and putrefying sores of poor humanity. The Society also helps forward the cause of Medical Missions by training students, male and female, and by building and furnishing hospitals. The students trained through the Society's grants must evince a true missionary vocation, lest they prove mere doctors working in a heathen land ; and the capacity to become fully qualified, lest by blundering they create a prejudice against their religion. Thus, in their twofold character as messengers of the Gospel and healers of the sick, they to their utmost promote Christian Knowledge among the peoples to whom they minister.

Such are some of the main lines of the Society's activities, but they are interwoven with a network of lesser lines which connect them with well-nigh every conceivable need of the Church. Its claims on the liberality and support of Churchmen are greater to-day than ever before. The Anglican Communion is "increas-

ing with the increase of God," and of that great organization the S.P.C.K. is the loyal handmaid. To it the Bishops turn from all parts of the world. It is their sheet-anchor. Are falling dividends reducing the Bishop's salary to vanishing point, has a hurricane levelled his churches, a fire consumed his house, a storm engulfed his mission ship, locusts devoured his clergy's stipends, or a raiding tribe demolished his schools? "The S.P.C.K. will help," he thinks. On it the Church workers at home lean. Is a town parson distracted for the want of a mission-room and a Lay Helper? "I'll see what the S.P.C.K. can do," he says. Does a man or woman long to give their lives to the active service of Christ, but poverty hinders? "Write to the S.P.C.K.," advises a friend. An invasion of hop-pickers—"Ask the S.P.C.K. to send down a thousand or two suitable tracts," says the Rector. The villagers of Stick-in-the-Mud have gone to sleep—"Let us get the S.P.C.K. to wake them up with a lantern and some slides," suggests the churchwarden—and "ask them to give us some new Hymn-books," puts in his wife, "and maps and pictures for the school, and another grant for the library." And so the stream of applications flows in day by day.

Yet a Bishop on furlough from Foreign Service, his heart aflame with gratitude, speaking to a home-staying Churchman about the work of the S.P.C.K., was amazed to hear the man say that he had never heard of his Church's oldest Society. That this unhappy ignorance is widespread is evident from the fact that the Society's income is less now than it was years ago. It is true that the S.P.C.K. affords an excellent object-lesson in the wise expenditure of money, the art of stretching out a meagre income to cover the enormous demands upon it, but that is not its *raison d'être*. The multiplication of minor societies has no doubt tended to lessen the support given to this historic agency. But surely the claims are paramount of that venerable Society which in the darkest days of England's moral life came to the rescue, and in faith and hope, by prayer and self-sacrifice, laid the foundations of the countless educational and spiritual advantages which we enjoy to-day at home and abroad.

From their rest in Paradise the voices of the holy and humble



S.P.G. MISSION HOSPITAL, CAWNPORE.

men of heart who began the work bid us hand on the legacy. From all quarters of the world the voices of our fellow-countrymen call to us to help the Society that helps them. From the lands of heathendom "the voiceless silence of despair" cries to us to speed the chariot of the Society that bids them hope. The wants are terrific, the need is crying, and how can we, blessed through our forefathers' devotion, neglect the duty of promoting throughout the world the spread of Christian Knowledge?

"Shall I give unto the *LORD* my *GOD* of that which costs me *nothing?*"

MAY COCHRANE.



SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
LONDON: NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.

[9.5.04.]

